

## LEVEL 1 - 17 OF 21 STORIES

Copyright 2001 U.P.I.  
United Press International

September 25, 2001, Tuesday

SECTION: GENERAL NEWS

LENGTH: 546 words

HEADLINE: Secondhand smoke ups asthma, cancer risk

DATELINE: BERLIN, Sept. 25

## BODY:

Research presented Tuesday suggested that secondhand smoke raises adult risk of developing asthma and possibly even lung cancer.

Previous research on secondhand smoke focused on its effects in children, but there was little known about what it could do to healthy adults. Now, three studies presented at the 11th European Congress on Lung Disease and Respiratory Medicine in Berlin affirm the belief that passive smoking is dangerous to everyone.

In the first study, researchers led by Maritta Jaakkola of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in Helsinki, Finland studied 718 non-smoking adults, 231 of whom had been recently diagnosed with asthma.

After analyzing their exposures to secondhand smoke, they found those exposed in the workplace were 2.16 times more likely to develop asthma compared to adults not exposed and participants who lived with a spouse or partner who smoked faced a risk 4.77 times greater.

While anti-smoking laws enacted in Europe have helped, Jaakkola said, not everyone is kicking the habit. "I think in many countries (smoking) is going up among women and down among men," Jaakkola told United Press International. "It's been reduced, but it still exists."

Jaakkola also said her findings show there's no place that's safe from asthma risk. "Both workplace and home exposures seem to increase the risk of asthma in adults," Jaakkola said.

In the second study, Sandra Baldacci of the Institute of Clinical Physiology in Pisa, Italy, looked at 2,335 non-smoking Italian women. Forty-seven percent of the group reported exposure to passive smoking within the last week. Women's risks of developing shortness of breath while resting and obstructive lung disease such as emphysema was 2.1 and 2.3, respectively.

Those who were married to smokers and worked among smokers faced risks of 2.8 and 4.2 times greater, respectively, than women not exposed.

A third study from Neuherberg and Munich, in Germany, compared 234 female lung cancer patients who had never smoked to 535 women who had smoked no more than 400 cigarettes in their lifetimes. Women exposed to their partner's passive smoking more than 76,000 hours or approximately 8 1/2 years had a 1.67 times greater risk for lung cancer. That risk jumped to 2.67 times for women

PM3006558257

United Press International September 25, 2001, Tuesday

exposed to more than 40,000 hours of secondhand smoke at work. Why the workplace risk might be higher than home risk is not explained, though it's possible people spent more time at work than at home.

"Women seem to have more effects to secondhand smoke than men do," Dr. Linda Ford, director of the asthma and allergy center in Papillion, Neb., and the president of the American Lung Association from 1998-1999, told UPI. "Our airways are narrower," possibly making women more susceptible, she said.

In the United States, while smoking rates have declined, asthma rates have gone up. Dr. Norman H. Edelman, consultant of scientific affairs for the American Lung Association in New York said while "there's no question that passive smoking exacerbates asthma," it's unclear whether it causes the disease in adults. The data upholds that secondhand smoke causes asthma in children, he said, but the data on adults is sketchy.

"We're suspicious," Edelman said, "but we don't really know."

LOAD-DATE: September 26, 2001

PM3006558258